

Canadian Wildlife Service
Arctic Ecology Map Series
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Anderson River

ANDERSON RIVER
(Sheets N.T.S. 97 S.W. and 97 S.E.)

This large scale (1:500,000) map sheet encompasses 28,000 square miles of the Arctic mainland and coastal waters which include Franklin and Darnley Bays and Amundsen Gulf.

Approximately three quarters of the land area is tundra which varies in elevation from low coastal plains to inland plateaus and hilly areas above the 2500 foot level. Northern coniferous forest covers the southwest quarter of the region.

Several hundred Muskoxen and large numbers of Barren-Ground Caribou occupy the lowland tundra regions in summer and Muskoxen are found in the upland areas during the winter months. Numerous Moose also utilize the willow growth of the lower Mason and Horton Rivers during the summer and move upstream to the forest regions in winter.

Barren-Ground Grizzly are common throughout the tundra regions particularly along the river systems.

Polar Bear are found along the coast and Arctic Fox are widely distributed.

Good populations of Marten are found in the forested regions which also contain Beaver, Mink, Coloured and Arctic Foxes.



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Beluga Whales and Seals are common to numerous along the coast and Bowhead Whales have been observed in migration through Amundsen Gulf.

Several species of waterfowl which include Black Brant, Lesser Snow Geese, Eider Ducks and Whistling Swans nest in the region and additional species congregate in large numbers in the coastal waters during migration.

Many of the numerous fresh water streams and lakes contain populations of Lake Trout, Arctic Char, Whitefish and Lake Herring. Inconnu occur in the Anderson River which is the approximate eastern limit for this species.

Most of the Eskimo population reside at Paulatuk on Darnley Bay or in hunting or fishing camps along the coast. Trappers from as far away as Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk visit the Anderson River area each winter.

The following is the descriptive text for units mapped in this sheet.

UNIT NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

- 1 White Whales and Bowhead Whales range and migrate through the Amundsen Gulf during the summer. (Mansfield)

- 2 This unit is considered important for waterfowl. The following species utilize the area:

Brant Geese nesting	250 pairs
Eider Ducks nesting	500 pairs
Swans nesting	50 pairs

In addition, Snow Geese use the area during spring migrations. Nesting generally occurs May 25th through August 15th for all species. (Barry)

- 3 Muskoxen are known to occupy this area consistently. They have been reported in the area for several years. (Hawley)

- 4 Arctic Char run up the Hornaday River as far as Rummy Creek to spawn. (Barry, Hunter)
The annual harvest quota for this system is set at 10,000 pounds. (Hunter)

- 5 The occurrence of caribou in this area in early spring and continuing into fall suggests that it is the major calving ground for a segment of the Great Bear Herd. (Barry, Hawley)
Available information would indicate that this group is the one that makes a circular migration westward in fall to the area south of Liverpool Bay then southward to near Colville Lake before turning northward in March to this location. Calving then takes place approximately the first week in June. It is estimated that about 10-20,000 caribou are included in this group. (Hawley)

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- 6 This area is considered critical Muskoxen range all year around. (Williams, Hawley, Kelsall, Barry) Population estimates vary considerably, however the most recent made in 1970 places the total population for a widespread area south of Paulatuk and Darnley Bay at between 425 and 625 animals. (Kelsall, et al. 1970) Until recently the largest single group reported numbered 65, however in 1970 herds numbering as large as 100 were sighted. (Hawley)
- 7 The western limit of Muskoxen range is outlined by the boundary of this unit. Although the most critical unit for Muskoxen has been described in Unit 6, Muskoxen are found scattered throughout the extent of this larger unit (Unit 7). Most recent population estimates for the region south of Darnley Bay are between 425 and 625. (Kelsall, et al. 1970) This large area is also a summering ground for Barren-Ground Caribou. Manning, et al. (1956) estimated that 46,000+ caribou utilize this region. The critical calving area is outlined by Unit 5, however the entire unit should be considered important for caribou.
- 8 This unit comprises a unique ecological area. Snowy Owls are found breeding here, and foxes, loons, Muskox and caribou are commonly seen in this region. The elevation is relatively high for the Arctic. Bluenose Lake itself has a good Lake Trout fishery. (Macpherson, Kelsall)
- 9 Barren-Ground Caribou have utilized this area annually for several years. Numbers vary from about 1,500 to 10,000 or (reportedly) 20,000 animals. They may be a segment of the Great Bear Herd which numbers near 50,000 animals. Many animals are known to summer between Paulatuk and Horton River while reports by Kelsall and Thomas indicate the animals of

UNIT NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

- 9
(continued) the main herd summer much further east. Unit 9 may be utilized from October through March. However, after January 1st, they will be located in the timbered area south of 69°. In some years the animals may leave the entire area by mid-January on a continuing southward trek. (Hawley)
- 10 Muskoxen use this area in groups up to 50 animals. Recent reports suggest they remain here all year around. (Hawley)
- 11 This unit encompasses one of the finest Marten areas in Canada. (Bryant, Hall, Williams) The boundary generally follows the Anderson River. A few Beaver are also found within this unit as well. (Bryant)
- 12 Barren-Ground Caribou summering in this area are probably those that utilize the wintering grounds immediately to the south and east. No data exists on the numbers or precise distribution. Reports from pilots indicate the Caribou are continuous in summer from the Anderson River to the Hornaday River. There may be a calving area within this area, or further east and south of the calving area shown as Unit 5. No further information available. (Hawley)
- 13 2 Gyrfalcons were observed in this area, and one nest was located in 1968. (Yorath)
- 14 The slopes of the Horton River are very good areas for Grizzly Bear denning. (Barry) In 1968 six different observations of Grizzly Bears (one with young) were made by Yorath in the area outlined by this unit.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
15	Approximately 75 pairs of Whistling Swans nest in this area May 25th to September 1st. Numerous ducks and some White-Fronted Geese also nest here. The area is considered important for waterfowl. (Barry)
16	Lake Trout, Whitefish and Lake Herring are found in all lakes on the Parry Peninsula. The productivity for these lakes is usually $\frac{1}{2}$ pound per acre. (Hunter)
17	Along the west coast of the Parry Peninsula in Franklin Bay there is a population of Greenland Cod that are plentiful in one in seven years. A heavy fishery cannot be sustained. (Hunter)
18	3,000± seals observed in this region. (Barry) No further information available.

REFERENCES

Personal Communication

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J. E. Bryant
V. D. Hawley (Canadian Wildlife Service)
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A. H. Macpherson
- J. G. Hunter (Fisheries Research Board of
A. W. Mansfield Canada)
- R. B. Hall
R. Williams (Northwest Territories, Game Branch)
- C. J. Yorath Institute of Sedimentary and
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Reports and Publications

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